

Lead in Drinking Water

Lead is a highly toxic metal that can cause serious health problems, especially for babies, children, and pregnant women. Too much lead in the body can harm the brain, kidneys, nervous system and red blood cells.

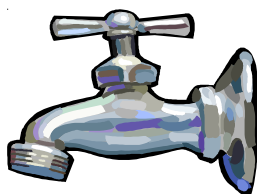
Young children and babies are most at risk to lead because their bodies are still growing. Children's bodies take in and keep more lead than adults. Large amounts of lead in the blood can affect a child's ability to learn and how they act. A fetus can also be affected by a woman being around lead before and during pregnancy.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has set the highest level for lead at .015 milligrams per liter (15 parts per billion) for drinking water. Steps should be taken to reduce lead if it is present.



Sources

Lead water pipes were commonly used until the 1940's. Lead solder was used until 1986; however, it is still around and may sometimes be used in the pipes in a house.



Lead in drinking water comes from the corrosive action of the water (especially soft water) on lead pipes and fittings, galvanized iron pipes and fittings, lead solder, and brass or chrome fixtures. It can be found in both public and private water systems and in pipes in the house.

Hot water dissolves lead in pipes more easily than cold water. For that reason, hot water should **not be used** for making baby food, formula or for cooking.



Boiling tap water will NOT reduce the amount of lead in your water.

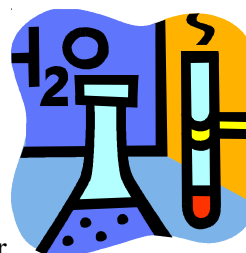


Bathing and showering should be safe for you and your children, even if the water has lead in it over EPA's action level. Human skin does not take in lead from water.

Testing

You cannot see, smell or taste lead in your water. The only way to know if lead is in water is to have it tested.

For public or community water supplies, ask your water provider if the water has lead in it. For private wells, call the NH Department of Environmental Services (DES). A "first draw" water sample - the very first water out of the tap after no water use for 6-8 hours - can be tested for lead. If lead is there, a flushed sample should be tested.



Treatment

FLUSH THE PIPES - In most cases, flushing out pipes will reduce the lead level. To flush the lines, let the water run for a few minutes until it is as cold as it gets. At this point, another water sample can be taken to see if the flushing was successful. If your second test shows more than .015 milligrams of lead per liter, the source of lead should be removed.



USE A FILTRATION SYSTEM - Check the manufacturer's information to be sure the product you choose can reduce lead to at least .015 milligrams per liter of water. Sediment filters do not remove lead.

OVER →

NH Department of Health & Human Services, Division of Public Health Services, Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program

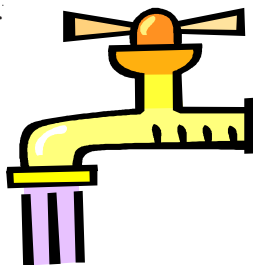
800-897-LEAD

rev. 4/07

Limit the risk.

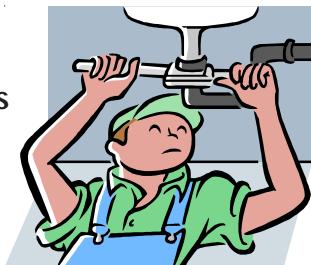
Use only cold water for cooking and drinking.

Before using any tap water for drinking or cooking, “flush” your water system by running the water tap(s) on **COLD** for **1–2 minutes**.



To save water, fill a clean bottle(s) with water after flushing the tap. This water will be safe for drinking, cooking, making baby formula, or other things to eat.

Make sure that repairs to copper pipes do not use lead solder.



Replace plumbing parts on supply lines that contain lead.

Use filtered water (or bottled water, if necessary).



For more information:

NH Department of Health and Human Services

Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program
29 Hazen Drive Concord, NH 03301

(800) 897-5323

(603) 271-4507

www.dhhs.nh.gov/dhhs/clppp

NH Department Of Environmental Services (DES)

Drinking Water and Ground Water Bureau
PO Box 95

Concord, NH 03302-0095

(603) 271-3503

www.des.nh.gov/dwgb

DES Water Testing Information

(603) 271-3445

www.des.nh.gov/well_testing.htm

EPA Ground Water & Drinking Water

This site includes information on lead in drinking water. Safe Drinking Water Hotline: 1-800-426-4791.

(<http://www.epa.gov/safewater/lead/index.html>)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Lead in Water: Questions and Answers

www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/faq/leadinwater.htm

NSF International

A nonprofit group that certifies bottled water and water filters, and offers information on water quality. Consumer Affairs Office toll-free hotline: 1-877-867-3435.

Information on bottled water and filters:

(http://www.nsf.org/consumer/bottled_water/index.asp)

Information on drinking water quality:

(http://www.nsf.org/consumer/drinking_water/index.asp)



NH Department of Health & Human Services, Division of Public Health Services, Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program



800-897-LEAD